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ABSTRACT

Australian policy towards Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people has historically been one of subjugation and acculturation. It wasn't until 1972 that a policy of self-determination for Aboriginal Australians (later to include Torres Strait Islanders) was introduced. The first year that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders were specifically mentioned in a highest-level government document was 1999, in the Adelaide Declaration on National Goals for Schooling in the Twenty First Century. In 2000, the federal government and the state of Queensland launched initiatives aimed at addressing issues that inhibit the attainment of equitable educational outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. The overarching issues are what they have always been: issues of culture, identity, and power, all infused overtly and covertly with elements of racism. Educators often assume that there is a single Aboriginal or Torres Strait culture, which leads to stereotyping. Low expectations of children can result in low self-esteem and poor academic achievement. Education inequality is related to unequal power relationships. In Australian society, Indigenous people have been referred to as "the lowest rung on the ladder." The education of Indigenous people should not have modified objectives, but certain groups may need different treatment to achieve objectives. Success in a globalized world requires an openness to international influences, but local dimensions need protecting not only for their own sake, but because they may have strategic importance both locally and globally. (Contains 23 references) (TD)

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THE MOST DISADVANTAGED? INDIGENOUS EDUCATION NEEDS.

(Presentation by Penny Tripcony, Chair, Indigenous Education Consultative Body, Queensland, to the National Education and Employment Forum [NEEF] 2000-2001, Parliamentary Annex, Brisbane, 7 October 2000.)

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It was not until 1948 - the same year as the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* - that the concept of Australian citizenship was formally defined and came into existence with the passage of the *Nationality and Citizenship Act* (later the *Australian Citizenship Act*). Drafted specifically in relation to immigrants, the Act states that:

> *Australian citizenship represents formal membership of the community of the Commonwealth of Australia; and*
> *Australian citizenship is a common bond, involving reciprocal rights and obligations, uniting all Australians while respecting their diversity...*

The meaning of citizenship thus encompasses rights, freedoms, duties and responsibilities. Many of the rights and freedoms available to non-Indigenous Australians (such as those of freedom of expression, movement, spiritual belief; rights concerning education, health and living standards, remuneration for work or service, social security) had in some instances been legislatively denied Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islander people. Alternatively, many Indigenous Australians had fulfilled citizens' duties and responsibilities, such as allegiance (membership of defence forces), as well as observance of laws, and support for their enforcement ('trackers', 'native police', etc).

(Tripcony, 1997)

Introduction.

On 22-23 April 1999, the Ministerial Council on Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA) announced *The Adelaide Declaration on National Goals for Schooling in the Twenty-First Century.* To those involved in Indigenous education, this announcement is particularly significant. It is the first occasion on which Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are specifically mentioned in a highest-level document.

The predecessor to *The Adelaide Declaration - The Hobart Declaration* (Common and Agreed National Goals for Schooling) - had been written in 1990, and referred to students of all cultures. At that time there was a history of 'special', or separate policies and strategies for the education of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, with the result that frequently Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students were not included in overall systems' and schools' strategies.

The intervening years had produced the amalgamation of tertiary institutions resulting from the Dawkins' reform, and the National Collaborative Curriculum for schools with its eight key learning areas as well as the Mayer (employment-related) competencies to

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be embedded within those curriculum areas – signifying the links between education and employment that are now more obvious in the goals of *The Adelaide Declaration.*

In Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander affairs, the *National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Policy* had been launched in 1989 and began implementation in 1990, that provided supplementary funding for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander programs across all education sectors. Earlier, in 1987, the *National Aboriginal Employment Development Policy* had also been accompanied by supplementary schemes supported by Commonwealth funds. Both of these policies had been 'add-ons', or equity programs that, in practice, often reinforced the non-inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in mainstream education and employment strategies.

A brief history of the positioning of Aboriginal education and links with employment.
Aboriginal education began in the early stages of British settlement. Although education systems were created in each of the states of Australia in the second half of the nineteenth century, the colonial government assumed some responsibility for 'educating' Aborigines by establishing a school in 1814 expressly for the purpose of *"civilizing and Christianizing Natives of the Port Jackson area".* (Rowley, 1972). Colonizers planned to use education as a controlling mechanism through which Aboriginal families would conform with British social mores.

The school failed. Lippman (1976) suggests that three factors contributed to this:

a) Elders feared that the school was destroying Aboriginal values and did not give their support;
b) Children found the curriculum irrelevant; and
c) British colonists resented government expenditure on Aborigines whom they believed to be inferior.

Currently, over 180 years since the first school for Aborigines, Lippman's suggested reasons for failure are still evident. Similar policies and strategies persist, with little or no consideration of the values and beliefs underpinning Indigenous lifestyles, needs and aspirations.

The expansion of settlement on the Australian continent led to the spread of introduced diseases, violent incidents and consequently, pockets of resistance from Aboriginal groups. A solution to some of these 'problems', offered in 1837 by a British House of Commons Select Committee (led by Lord Buxton, who was commissioned to investigate conditions of the native peoples in the colonies), recommended that Aboriginal people be 'protected' by being gathered together and located on reserves where they might receive instruction in English language and literacy (based on the Bible), and generally trained in British social protocols. These skills were perceived as essential for Aborigines to meet settlers' demands for labour.

With policy initially being developed in distant England, implementation of the Buxton report by individual Australian states began spasmodically, but marked the beginning of

the 'protectionist era'. (Queensland for example, introduced *The Aboriginals Protection and Restriction of the Sale of Opium Act* in 1897, which by its title and content, set about controlling Indigenous Australians and a socially unacceptable substance with the similar rules.) The nature of schooling provided to Aborigines on the reserves and missions during that era has been described by McConnochie:

> *"The bulk of the teachers were unqualified, inexperienced and overloaded with other administrative duties which placed them in the role of policemen rather than teachers. The education was conducted in inadequate and ill-equipped buildings, following a programme which at least fitted them for ill-paid seasonal work, and which provided no possibility for movement out of this situation. Aboriginal children were refused admission to the white school system, and in many instances received absolutely no education at all."* (1982:22)

Like the third world people referred to much later by Freire, Aboriginal people were *"...kept 'submerged' in a situation in which ...critical awareness and response were practically impossible."* (1972:10). Some Aboriginal people who had access to schooling began to see that attainment of English language and literacy skills, thereby conforming with dominant expectations, was a means of temporary release from missions and reserves. (McGarvie, 1988). In New South Wales, one group formed the Australian Aborigines Progressive Association and in 1938 presented a document to the Prime Minister calling for civil and political rights. The first two aims of the petition stated:

> *In particular, and without delay all Aborigines should be entitled to receive the same educational opportunities as white people.*
> *To receive the benefits of labour legislation, including Arbitration Court Awards, on an equality with white workers.* (Patten, *The Australian Abo Call*, April 1938:1).

Through the first aim, the Aboriginal authors, all of whom had received minimal formal schooling, made use of an 'acceptable' process, thus unwittingly confirming and legitimating the government's agenda for a policy of assimilation. At the same time the second aim strengthened the hitherto imposed link between education and employment, at a time when war in Europe was imminent and an increased workforce might be required.

Subsequently, new legislation was introduced, concerned with reserves becoming an institution for Aborigines until they were suitable for assimilation. 'Freedom' was to be permitted only at a price - the shift to the philosophy of assimilation was coupled with education as a measure of suitability:

> *The policy of assimilation means that all Aborigines and part-Aborigines are expected eventually to attain the same manner of living as other Australians and to live as members of a single Australian community enjoying the same rights and privileges, accepting the same responsibilities, observing the same customs and influenced by the same beliefs, as other Australians.*

> *Education was to train Aboriginals in the skills essential to their assimilation into the workforce...and...to bring about a change in attitudes and values among Aboriginals...* (House of Representatives Select Committee on Aboriginal Education, 1985:26)

The policy reflects a 'Brave New World' approach of class distinction, with Indigenes comprising a barely literate force of unskilled labourers. The proposed *"change in attitudes and values among Aborigines"* at least implies a recognition of existing values, although there is no evidence of attempts to explain or understand what values these might be, or why they should be changed.

In the late 1950s a policy of assimilation was formally instituted in Queensland (Craig, 1980), following its adoption in other states (McConnochie, 1982). Schooling programs during this era tended to be premised on a belief that Aboriginal people suffered from a 'cultural deprivation' or 'deficit' which had the effect of impoverishing their linguistic and cognitive ability. Programs were thus introduced to provide intensive remedial teaching to compensate for this 'deficit'.

In terms of formal government policies, an assimilationist discourse continued overtly until shortly after the federal referendum of 1967, which led to changes in the Australian Constitution to include Aborigines in the census, and to permit the transfer of responsibility for Aboriginal affairs from individual states to the federal government. These constitutional changes were supported by 90.77% of voters.

In 1972 a federal policy of self-determination for Aborigines (later to include Torres Strait Islanders) was introduced, and with it the allocation to states of supplementary funds specifically for Aboriginal affairs, which included education. These changes in Australian political direction raised expectations of Aboriginal people that education services, through consultation and negotiation with individual communities, would be more relevant to needs and aspirations.

The National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Policy (1989)

Since the adoption of the *Commonwealth of Australia Constitution Act, 1900*, responsibility for education has been that of individual states. As a result of the 1967 federal referendum, however, the Commonwealth assumed responsibility for Aboriginal affairs, and allocated specific funds to supplement states' spending on education for Aboriginal constituents.

Those involved in education within the states have been required to 'walk a fine line' between the policies and directions of the two levels of government, and continue to do so today.

According to the policy document, the *National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Policy* (NATSIEP) was developed because:

...Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people remain the most educationally disadvantaged group in Australia.... The (Aboriginal Education Policy) *Task Force reported....Australians take it for granted, as an inalienable right of citizens of this country, that their children will receive at least 10 years of education, as well as the benefits of early childhood education. However, these fundamental rights have not been extended to all Aboriginal families. This is clearly demonstrated by the fact that in the compulsory school years, 1 in 8 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children aged 5 to 9 years do not go to school or preschool, and for those aged 10 to 15 years an appalling 1 in 6 do not have access to appropriate schooling....* (DEET,1993:3)

This situation existed because of long-term generic policies and practices of which education was merely one component. A distinct national education policy did not emerge until the NATSIEP in 1989.

It should be noted that in the ten years since implementation began, the NATSIEP (with its supplementary funding) has achieved improved educational outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people across all sectors of education. It has thus contributed to the formulation of recent goals of inclusion.

The present – a national document of inclusion.

The Adelaide Declaration on National Goals for Schooling in the Twenty-First Century (MCEETYA, 1999) clearly signifies the links between education and employment by its goals for varying education pathways, vocational education, links with business and industry, literacy and numeracy competence, skilling teachers, involving parents and communities, etc. In terms of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education, the document presents a unified direction which might be interpreted as preparing states (and territories) to assume full responsibility for schooling of their Indigenous constituents at some time in the not too distant future. The social justice goals of *The Adelaide Declaration...*(below) encompass the two aspects of Indigenous education, ie. Education for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, and education for all students about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, societies and contemporary issues.

3.3 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students have equitable access to, and opportunities in, schooling so that their learning outcomes improve and, over time, match those of other students;

3.4 All students understand and acknowledge the value of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures to Australian society and possess the knowledge, skills and understanding to contribute to and benefit from, reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.

3.5 All students understand and acknowledge the value of cultural and linguistic diversity, and possess the knowledge, skills and understanding to contribute to, and benefit from, such diversity in the Australian community and internationally.

3.6 *All students have access to the high quality education necessary to enable the completion of school education to Year 12 or its vocational equivalent and that provides clear and recognised pathways to employment and further education and training.*

Other recent national and state directions for Indigenous education.
In March this year, the *National Indigenous English Literacy and Numeracy Strategy* (2000-2004) was launched jointly, in Sydney, by the Prime Minister and the Minister for Education, Training and Youth Affairs. I believe that the participation of the Prime Minister in the launch of this document, and the fact that the Strategy will be evaluated throughout the four years of its implementation, signifies the importance placed on its success by the Commonwealth government.

The six key elements of the Strategy address those issues that inhibit the attainment of equitable outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. The elements are:

1. Achieving attendance
2. Overcoming Hearing, Health and Nutritional Problems
3. Preschooling Experiences
4. Getting Good Teachers
5. Using the Best Teaching Methods
6. Measuring Success, Achieving Accountability.

Also in March of this year, Education Queensland launched *Partners for Success: Strategy for the Continuous Improvement of Education and Employment Outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples in Education Queensland,* the implementation of which should take into consideration the issues and directions of a second Queensland document, *2010: A future strategy - the contribution of state schools to the Smart State.*

All three documents support the development of partnerships. Based on reflections of this, the term "partner" needs to be defined; and the major issues impacting on Indigenous students, families and communities, which are grouped into categories, as follows:

Overarching issues are what they have always been: issues of culture, ...of identity, ...of power, each manifested in various ways during our relatively short history of participation in Western education, and yet all infused both overtly and covertly with elements of racism and

Specific (current) issues : (a) those intrinsic, and (b) those extrinsic, to schools education institutions, and workplaces.

Defining the term "partner"
Current education documents aim to develop strategies for establishing schooling partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander parents, students and communities. The terms "partnerships" and "partners" are frequently being used in

relation to education, training and employment. If we understand what these terms mean, we might have some idea what is expected of us as educators, students, parents and community members. The New Shorter Oxford Dictionary (1992:2111) includes the following definitions:

> ***partner, n.*** *1. A person who possesses something jointly with another or others.*
> *2. A person who takes part with another or others in doing something; an associate; a colleague; an accomplice.*
> *3. A person who is associated with another or others in the carrying on of a business with shared risks and profits.*

On examination of these meanings, I believe that all three are relevant to the use of the term "partnerships" in education and employment/business/industry contexts. However, this discussion will focus on schooling which aims to prepare individuals for life-long learning and employment choices.

The first definition suggests that we need to determine what it is that we jointly possess - the school, the learning process, the business, the industry, the future of our society, our country...?

The second definition implies an equally-shared enterprise, task or responsibility. Such an arrangement must surely recognise and value the skills, knowledge, experiences and (often) reputation of associates, colleagues, etc, and utilise such expertise to the fullest.

With reference to the third definition, if we see education as a business (recent corporatisation of education systems and the shift to school-based management imply that this is so); or an investment (spending on education as "an investment in the future"); then it follows that we should have some understanding of the possible "risks" and "profits" that might influence the outcomes of a partnership arrangement.

In the same way that any "good" business person takes the time to explore all actual and probable factors before entering into a partnership with another person or group, we need to know what our partners bring to the arrangement, to focus on strengths and develop strategies to overcome weaknesses. To do this in terms of partnerships with Indigenous students, parents and community members, it is essential to have some understanding of issues of culture, identity and power within the context of the "business" we plan to undertake.

The issue of culture

The term "culture" is one of the most complicated words in the English language. It can mean many things. In an education context, issues in relation to Indigenous Australians often arise, and just as often are referred to as issues of "cultural difference", "cultural inappropriateness", "cultural relevance", "a clash of cultures", and the like. It is rarely explained what is meant by these terms. Is it any wonder that many teachers experience difficulty when attempting to address such issues?

There are numerous academic discussions on the concept of culture. In an unpublished paper titled *"What is this thing called 'Culture'"*, Howard Groome (1996:4), refers to many of these discussions and how they might relate to Aboriginal education. He writes,

> *Faced with the evidence of the destructive effects of traditional understandings of the word culture many theorists over the last decade have advocated new interpretations of the term. There is now a range of concepts being discussed. All of these share one aspect in common. They have sought to move away from the concept of culture as a fixed entity, a complex of 'concrete behaviour patterns, customs, usages, traditions, habit clusters'. (Geertz 1973:87) Instead they have sought to stress the role of individuals over and above that of groups in forming patterns of personal cultures.*

Thus, culture is seen as a construct, which is neither fixed nor measurable, but dynamic: "*...a living organism that is continually being constructed by individuals in the course of their day to day living.*" (Groome, 1996:5)

There is not now, nor has there ever been, such things as the Aboriginal culture, or the Torres Strait culture. Yet lists of Aboriginal learning styles or Aboriginal behaviours continue to be made available to teachers. Such lists are problematic, in that they reinforce what is termed "essentialism", a notion which seeks to reduce Aboriginality to a few "essentials" or basic descriptors, usually based on traditional values. The lists are often then interpreted into practice as one of two approaches to teaching Indigenous students. Both approaches are dangerous. One approach denies urban Indigenous students any claims to having a characteristic identity; and the other approach proposes a generic Aboriginal culture or Torres Strait culture that anticipates certain behaviours of students. Both approaches result in Indigenous students being stereotyped and lumped together. Thus schooling becomes a disempowering process that hampers students' potential to learn and progress through their years of formal education. All students need to be accepted as individuals, and provided with educational opportunities accordingly.

With the notion of a range of cultures, comes values, lifestyles and language use, with implications for current practices of English literacy testing. Some questions we need to ask ourselves are: Who determines appropriate standards for English literacy? Which version of English is being tested? (Each of us uses a number of versions of English language on a regular basis.)

If culture is an individual construct, then it is linked with the issue of identity.

The issue of identity

As educators, we know that the critical period for the formation of identity is childhood and adolescence, which means that in both primary and secondary schools our interactions with students can influence the ways in which those students individually construct their identities. We can "make or break" them as students and, in the longer term, may influence their potential to become contributing members of society. We have

either witnessed, or learnt by "trial and error" in our early years of teaching, the "self-fulfilling prophecy" of students assuming behaviours that reflect our words and actions. If we continually tell students they are slow learners or "stupid" or "dumb"; or that they are disinterested or "don't care"; or that they are disruptive or "no good"; then they will often react by behaving in accordance with our attitudes towards them. Alternatively, students who are encouraged, and their efforts praised and rewarded, will usually develop and grow as learners and as people.

> *Aboriginal children need to develop pride in themselves. They need positive support to overcome negative self-concept and self-esteem.* (Groome, 1995:14)

The starting point is, of course, to recognise the identities and backgrounds of all students, and demonstrate that we value the life experiences they bring to the learning situation. For Aboriginal students and Torres Strait Islander students, this means accepting them for who they are. But how do we do this? Who is an Aboriginal student or a Torres Strait Island student?

> *Being Aboriginal is not the colour of your skin, or how broad your nose is. It is a spiritual feeling, an identity you know in your heart. It is a unique feeling that is difficult for a non-Aboriginal to fully understand.* (Burney, 1983)

The Commonwealth government definition has three criteria relating to Indigenous identity, all of which must be met. An individual must -

> be an Aboriginal person or a Torres Strait Island person, or a descendent of Aboriginal people or Torres Strait Islands' people; and
> must identify as an Aboriginal person or a Torres Strait Island person; and
> be recognised as such by their respective Aboriginal or Torres Strait Island community.

The definition contains no reference to physical appearance or to geographic location or lifestyle. Yet, in educational settings we continue to hear statements such as, "They say they're Aboriginal, but they don't look it."; and "They're not really Aboriginal - they live in a nice house; the parents have good jobs and drive cars; they're just the same as any suburban family." ; and " It's only the ones in the desert and the north who are the true Aborigines (or Torres Strait Islanders).". These examples are verbal expressions of attitudes and actions that not only deny students' identities, but tell us more about the speaker than the subject. Unless we, as educators, attempt to examine our own prejudices and correct such statements, our inaction serves to confirm "*...the major social scientific paradigms that have shaped education for non-white children and adults have, in part, been influenced by the racial identity development of educators themselves.*" (Carter and Goodwin, 1994:307). We are thus guilty of contributing to the further disempowerment of Indigenous students in a system that has relentlessly perpetuated the myths and stereotypes that have abounded in this country since British occupation.

The issue of power

Education inequality is related to unequal power relationships. Within the structure of Australian society, Indigenous people have been referred as "the lowest rung on the ladder", which demonstrates the relationship between power and race. Our children become aware of this at a very early age.

> *As they travel, shop and watch TV, Aboriginal children begin to meet a world in which they rarely see Aboriginal faces. Most become aware of hostility towards them and their family in many settings. This awareness of a different world is dramatically confirmed when they first attend school. Suddenly they are in a new, overwhelming, environment in which they are very clearly a minority, and sometimes a despised one. Racism has many faces and it is rare to find a school in which several are not displayed.* (Groome, 1995:20)

There are many levels of power. At the macro level, Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islander people know that in a world where power is linked to financial wealth, they possess little of perceived value; consequently, as groups within the current social strata, they have no bargaining power and no say in directions for the future of this country.

Schools, however, are in an unusual position in this regard. On one hand, schools (education generally) reflect and reproduce social values, lifestyles, etc: yet schools can also develop in students the knowledge and skills to contribute to social change and justice, hence the power of pedagogy and of curriculum. Keeffe (1992:8) writes of the...*negative and positive force*... of curriculum as ...*something which both works on and through people....its mode of operation* (viewed) *as both enabling and constraining.* He adds that:

> *Only such a sense of power is capable of viewing cultural change from two perspectives, those of the relatively powerful and the relatively powerless.*

Michael Fullan (1993) considers that educational reform can do much to influence the dynamic of social change, and as educators, we can each play a part as agents of that process.

Factors intrinsic and extrinsic to the school

Major factors intrinsic to the school that impact on Indigenous students have been discussed under the broader headings of culture, identity and power. Factors labelled 'extrinsic' are those outside of the control of educators, such as:

current issues reported through the popular media; for example,

- Native Title issues generally, and the negative comments of people perceived to be leaders in political, legal and industrial spheres;
- damaged relationships between the government and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission;

- the Royal Commission inquiry into 'the stolen generations' and the reluctance on the part of present governments to accept, endorse and recognise recommendations from the final report;
- Aboriginal deaths in custody;
- reports of violence and living conditions in Indigenous communities;
- extremely high unemployment rates (up to 90 per cent in some areas); and
- Indigenous health issues - the mortality of Indigenous people is *...about 3.5 times greater than expected for males and about 4 times greater than expected for females, based on comparisons with non-Indigenous rates. The differences were most pronounced among adults of working age, especially those aged 25-54 years, for whom there were 6-8 times the expected number of deaths.* (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 1994:1)

While we cannot do a great deal about many of these matters directly, it is important to acknowledge that they impact on all Australians, particularly Indigenous communities, and are often the foundations of racist comments and actions within schools. What we need to do is heighten awareness of such racism, and develop strategies for dealing with it.

The future...

For the education and training of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people – indeed for the education and training of all people – there must be no modified objectives. There does, however, need to be differing pathways to those objectives; pathways across sectors, and multi-entry and multi-exit points that allow for 'time out' to consolidate learnings, attend to family or community responsibilities. It is our job as educators to acknowledge and value the life experiences of all learners, and to facilitate and guide learning that builds on those experiences.

Indigenous Australians are well aware of the importance of attaining knowledge and skills through education and employment in order to survive the accelerating rate of social, political and economic change; but at the same time we wish to retain our individuality, our cultural identity, and our sense of community, for it is these things that we value and make us what we are.

Many leaders in education recognise this.

> To achieve regular school attendance by Indigenous students....*requires us to understand the needs in the classroom...to understand how they view the world...if needs are not met then they are somewhere else doing something else – being disempowered. If a school community is not committed to change, then we will never achieve this objective.* (Kemp, 2000.)

> *The substantial social, political and economic changes that are likely in the twenty-first century, and whatever educational reforms we put in place to try and prepare students for them will inevitably advantage some and disadvantage*

others. We know how the present system works in this regard and it would behove us to analyse and anticipate the likely consequences of the current reforms rather than assume all social justice issues will go away. It may be that certain groups and individuals need different treatment from the beginning and that these can be identified now, and not be left to merge as problems in the new system...

To succeed in a globalised world is likely to require an openness to international economic, political and cultural influences, but is likely to require a will to protect the uniqueness of the local economic, political and cultural dimensions. The uniqueness of the local needs protection not only for its own sake, and not only so as to ensure that the diversity of human culture and environment remains, but also because the local may be a thing of value with huge strategic importance both locally and globally. (Porter, 1999.)

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